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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAMA 000272

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [BA](#) [REGION](#)  
SUBJECT: BAHRAIN: ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT AND UNSCR 1747  
DEMARCHES

REF: A. STATE 37801

[1](#)B. STATE 36209

Classified By: Ambassador William T. Monroe for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)  
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Summary  
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[1](#)1. (C) In response to reftel demarches on the Arab League (AL) summit and UNSCR 1747, Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid said the summit would deal primarily with two issues: Israel-Palestinian peace and Iraq. He emphasized the importance of Saudi Arabia hosting the summit and taking a leading role on regional affairs. He thought the AL could issue a statement on the peace process similar to that of Jordan's King Abdullah to Congress - a vision of full Arab peace with Israel and negotiations on all issues. On the refugee question, the Arabs could press Palestinians to move to a new state of Palestine, while only 1948 refugees born in present-day Israel would be allowed to return to it. On Iraq, the ForMin said Bahrain is feeling more comfortable about the situation on the ground and he pledged that Bahrain would engage. Bahrain is taking UNSCR 1747 very seriously and will implement it fully. Shaikh Khalid reported rumors of infighting in Tehran on the government's handling of the nuclear issue. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador March 25 delivered reftel demarches on the Arab League ministerial and summit and UN Security Council resolution 1747 to Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa. Shaikh Khalid said the AL meetings would deal with two main issues: making progress on peace between Israel and the Palestinians, and Iraq. He noted the irony that the Arabs are pondering making peace with Israel while at the same time discussing the Iranian threat to Arab national security. He emphasized the importance of Saudi Arabia hosting the summit and taking a leading role on regional matters. Shaikh Khalid understood that the heads of state of Morocco, Libya, and Oman would not attend the summit.

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Arab Engagement on Peace Process  
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[1](#)3. (C) On the Israel-Palestinian situation, Shaikh Khalid said Arab-Israeli engagement would increase concurrent with progress in the peace process. The Arabs were encouraged by Israel's statement that the AL initiative could be a basis for negotiations. He thought that perhaps the AL summit

could issue a statement similar to that made recently by Jordan's King Abdullah to Congress. King Abdullah had offered a vision of full Arab peace with Israel and said there should be negotiations on all issues. On the Palestinian refugee situation, Shaikh Khalid said that if there was a strong Israeli commitment to peace, the Arabs would put pressure on Palestinian refugees to move to a new state of Palestine. Israel, he suggested, could offer to allow the remaining 1948 refugees who were born in present-day Israel to return to it, while not permitting subsequent generations to do so. If Israeli settlements turned over to a Palestinian government were in good condition, they could be used to house returned refugees.

14. (C) In Shaikh Khalid's view, it was important to get things moving now, with no pre-conditions. Israeli conditions would "put us into a corner." A favorable AL statement could move things in the right direction. The Arabs want a major push. Bahrain will be involved, Shaikh Khalid said, "shaking hands with Israelis" to achieve progress on peace. He noted that Saudi Arabia must play a lead role in this process. Referring to the Secretary's March 24 meeting in Aswan, Shaikh Khalid wondered about the role of the "Arab Quartet" and the implications for the GCC 2 group. The Ambassador replied that the GCC 2 addressed a broad range of regional issues while the Arab Quartet was involved in only the Israel-Palestinian situation.

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"Why Delay" Iraq Neighbors Meeting  
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15. (C) Turning to Iraq, Shaikh Khalid said that Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari was still considering where to hold the Iraq Neighbors ministerial meeting. "Why delay," he

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asked, and suggested holding the meeting in either Istanbul or Cairo. The focus should be on getting things moving in Iraq. He admitted that regional countries needed to do more with Iraqis and noted that former PM Allawi would visit Bahrain soon. The GOB is feeling more comfortable with events on the ground in Iraq and he pledged that Bahrain will engage. "We're with you all the way," the FM said.

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Full Implementation of UNSCR 1747  
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16. (C) Shaikh Khalid said Bahrain was taking UNSCR 1747 very seriously. "We will apply the resolution fully, against people and entities, and tell others in the Gulf to do so as well." He said he would discuss implementation with the Finance Minister and Central Bank governor and pledged that Bahrain would report back to the UN on the steps it had taken within two months, per the resolution. The Ambassador pointed out that the resolution increased the pressure on Iran while pushing for a peaceful resolution to the situation. There are signs that some positive things are happening and that Iranian President Ahmadi-Nejad is coming under pressure at home. The ForMin said he had heard there was infighting in Tehran on the government's handling of the nuclear situation, and he had sensed during his November 2006 visit to Moscow that the Russian government was unhappy with Iran, particularly for its lack of payment on the Bushehr reactor construction. Shaikh Khalid said it was important to maintain unanimity in the Security Council on Iran.

17. (C) On Lebanon, Shaikh Khalid noted that the AL had invited both President Lahoud and Prime Minister Siniora to attend the summit. This was an important message to Lahoud. The ForMin recalled that Syrian Vice President Shara, during a recent visit to Bahrain, had asked Bahrain to work as an intermediary between Syria and Saudi Arabia to improve the bilateral relationship. The GOB had replied that Syria should go directly to Saudi Arabia.

18. (C) Shaikh Khalid had little comment on our Sudan and Somalia points, indicating that these two issues would not be the top priority at the summit. He expressed his view that the Sudan government should accept the UN Heavy Support Package and the African Union/UN hybrid force.

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